1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

were ineffectual. In such cases the person who thinks he is wronged may curse his suspected aggressor by calling on *Rum Adum*, the Just God, to punish him by making him halt, maimed and blind. If the aggressor should be guilty he or his relations will die.

In the case of disputes between individuals a solemn oath may be made with religious ceremony, and also in the case of people who are suspected of evil doing without having any definite accusers; for instance, it would be open to Hlatam to make a solemn oath that she was not a poisoner; she has not done so. About twenty years ago, however, a man in a neighbouring village who was suspected of poisoning made the requisite ceremonies to swear that he was innocent of the victim's death;[11] his guilt is now believed to be firmly established, for he and all his kin subsequently died the same painful and lingering death. False swearing is for the Lepchas one of the most important and unsocial crimes; the false swearer and his family would be shunned. But there is more to it than that; a perjurer among one's ancestors constitutes an hereditary taint; all the descendants of such a one will die young; and therefore in arranging marriages care must be taken to see that the intended spouse does not come of such a family.[12]

Personal quarrels are felt to be the concern of everybody, and every effort is made to prevent them, or to stop them once they have broken out. Annually in the autumn an elaborate ceremony is held in the monastery to destroy the trinity of devils (enmity of speech, thought and deed) who cause quarrelling; and the first action in any public or private lamaist ceremony is to invoke and destroy Gett'r *moong*, the quarrel demon, to prevent disputes among the celebrants, and especially the noisy abuse which may occur when people have drunk too much. In the unhappy event of a quarrel taking place despite these precautions a mutual friend of the two disputants will give a feast for them to try and make up the trouble. Should the quarrel continue for no apparent reason

[11] See Chapter Fifteen, pp. 392–393.

[12] The heredities which render a person undesirable as a marriage partner are the following:—

(1) *Sanaar Tsuk git* an ancestor has been killed by a bear.
(2) *Doam git* an ancestor has died of leprosy.
(3) *Rumdong git* an ancestor has died of a violent jaundice.
(4) *Ryak mat git* an ancestor has committed perjury.
(5) *Arot moong git* an ancestor has died by violence.

All these disabilities are believed to be hereditary.